

Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver us From the Evil one

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matt. 6:9-13)

“Augustine in his *Confessions* relates the story of a young man at Rome who had been won from a life of sin and licentiousness to Christ. He forsook his old ways. One day some of his friends persuaded him to go with them to the Colosseum. He took a seat with his companions far up on the topmost bench of that colossal ellipse. As soon as the trumpet rang for the spectacle to commence, he firmly closed his eyes, resolved not to look upon the unholy sights. So the spectacles passed. But at one act, or conflict, the excited and blood-intoxicated thousands put up a mighty roar of acclaim. At the sound, Alypius opened his eyes, just for a moment. But by the one look he was lost. He forsook Christ and went back to the world. Do not imagine that it is safe to take even one look at sin, just for a moment to caress it with the touch of furtive imagination.” Source: <http://www.moreillustrations.com/>

Of all the statements in the Lord's prayer, it is probably this last one that confuses people most. After all, why ask God not to lead us into temptation? Are we asking God to not do something he would never do? Or is there some sinister side to God we have not known about, where He could tempt us, and here we guard ourselves against it?

We can dismiss this last concern very quickly. James tells us in no uncertain terms that God is not the one who tempts people to do evil.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (Jas. 1:13)

We know we are not asking, please do not tempt us. So what are we asking? We can answer that by answering three questions. First, what is the meaning of *temptation*, in this verse? Second, what does it mean to “deliver us from the evil one”, and how will deliverance from the Evil One relate to this request? Third, we'll ask what the whole request then means.

I. What is the meaning of “temptation”?

Most well-taught Christians understand the difference between the ideas of temptation and trial. The idea of temptation has to do with an enticement to sin, a test of our desires, where we are tempted, allured to evil. The idea of a trial has to do with a problem or pain or form of suffering we go through, for the sake of Christ. So we associate evil with the one, something more like purification with the other.

What not many Christians realise is that the Bible uses one word for both ideas. *Peirasmos* is the Greek word, and it is translated in some places *trials*, and in other places *temptation*. In its verb form, it is sometimes translated tempt, and sometimes translated test.

For example, in the first verses of James, it clearly means a test suffering or difficulty: 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (Jas. 1:2-3)

But just a few verses later, James is talking about being enticed to do evil: Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He

Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (Jas. 1:13-14)

Now ask yourself, why would the Holy Spirit use one word to describe two different ideas? Because both experiences have something of the other.

Think about it. Every enticement to sin is really a test of our love for God. When Adam and Eve were tempted to eat of the tree, that was a test of whether they would trust the Word of God above all other words. They were being enticed by Satan, but it was also a trial of their love for God. Would they keep on trusting that God knew what was good, or would they strike out for their own knowledge of good and evil? Every time you are enticed to lie to someone, to cheat on an exam or a paper or a return, to look at Internet porn, to insult and revile another, to gossip, you are simultaneously being tested, put on trial for what you love the most, what you believe in the most.

Let's swing it around. Every trial or suffering also entices us to respond with ungodliness. Job was given a trial of losing his wealth, losing his children, losing his health, but that trial was an enticement to stop trusting God, to curse God and deny His existence. Job was tempted to self-pity, tempted to question God's justice, tempted to feel things were unfair, and all this came during a trial. You might have a trial of bad health, or a trial of marital struggles, a trial of financial squeeze, a trial of difficult colleagues, a trial of persecution for your faith. But in every case, your pain entices the flesh within to respond with unbelief, to respond with murmuring, with resentment to another, with outbursts of anger, with self-pity, with attacking another.

Temptations are a form of trial, and trials are a form of temptation. Both contain something of the other, and both can lead to the other.

A temptation, an enticement can turn into a test that we pass, a form of suffering that we endure and go through. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in three ways, His victory over Satan became a test that proved His submission and faith in the Father. It showed that the Second Adam could face the same test, and conquer with the Word of God and faith.

A trial can turn into a situation of sinful responses, where what is coming out of our hearts is evil. Job's wife succumbed to despair and told Job to curse God and die. The trial of David's popularity became a temptation in Saul's heart to jealousy and eventually murderous hatred.

This doesn't mean they're identical. It means they are like two sides of the same coin. A trial is a temptation on the other side, and a temptation is a trial on the other side. Perhaps we should hyphenate temptation and trial and speak of temptation-trial, or enticement-test.

So which side of the coin is the Bible speaking of here in the Lord's prayer? We could be asking for deliverance from a temptation-trial, with the shade of meaning leaning towards enticement to evil, or we could be asking for deliverance from temptation-trial with the shade of meaning towards pain or problems or suffering.

The only way to know is to look at the second half of the request. This is a request with two halves, and the one qualifies and explains the other. It is not "lead us not into temptation, fullstop, deliver us from evil." No, it's do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. There is a very strong contrasting conjunction in the original language, that shows these two are contrasted. The positive, being led into temptation will be prevented if we are delivered from the evil one.

II. What is meant by "deliver us from the evil one"?

Now the first thing you will notice is that the NKJV translates this as "deliver us from the Evil

One". But if you are used to the Lord's Prayer in the old King James, it read "deliver us from evil". That's still how it reads in the ESV and the NASB. Why the Evil One, and is it correct? In the original language, the words are simply the evil. But the reason it is translated the Evil One is because the word for evil is singular masculine form. It is not just generic evil, in which case the noun would be neuter. It is evil in the form of a person identified in the masculine – he that is evil. which is why the best translation would be the Evil One.

Ephesians 6:16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (Eph. 6:16)

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. (2 Thess. 3:3)

1 John 3:12 not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. . (1 Jn. 3:12)

I think very significantly, we see a version of this very request in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer in John 17. **John 17:15** "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. (Jn. 17:15)

I think the NKJV has it exactly right: deliver us from the Evil One. Satan, the devil, and his organised forces of spiritual creatures who fell with Him. Deliver us, which means save us, rescue us.

In what sense are we to be rescued from him? In context, it is deliverance from his attempts. What will the Evil One do? Satan will take God-given tests, and exploit them into temptations. Trials, as we've seen, already have an element of enticement within them. James teaches us that the biggest form of temptation does not come from outside, but from within. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (Jas. 1:13-14)

But what Satan does is to aggravate the situation, by introducing added elements. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not made by Satan; it was made by God. God placed it there to test them. But Satan arrived and added his own element that turned the trial into a powerful enticement to sin.

The Lord Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness was a test. It was a test by God. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matt. 4:1)

Satan took that test of Jesus' devotion to God and preparation for ministry, and turned it into a temptation.

For that matter, the cross was a test. Gethsemane was a test. But by entering Judas' heart, Satan turned the test into a temptation to abandon the mission.

Now as we look at how Satan approached Eve, and how he approached Christ, we can identify two main strategies that Satan uses to aggravate the trial, and turn it into a strong temptation to sin.

His first strategy is to flatter us and tempt us to pride. Satan said to Eve, "You won't die! God actually is afraid of the person you'll become when you eat this fruit. You'll be a god yourself!"

Satan said to Christ, "If you're God's Son, you are invulnerable. You can jump off the Temple and angels will catch you. You'll be instantly acclaimed as Son of God."

Now it worked with Eve, and it didn't work with Christ. But it is the same approach with us.

Satan, or one of his forces of spiritual wickedness comes to us and says things like, "You deserve this. You deserve a bit of pleasure, a bit of freedom. Go on, it's your right." "No one should speak to you like that. You put your foot down and give them a piece of your mind." "You don't have to follow all those rules. That's for those sheeple. You're a unique, free spirit. Do it your way."

"Yes, treating this person this way isn't nice, but he deserves it. The way he has treated you, it is

only right that you treat him this way.”

What is all of this? It is a voice that seeks to strengthen our resolve to sin by appealing to pride. You're exempt from the rules. You can get away with it. You deserve better than you're getting. You need to take care of yourself. You don't have to put up with this. It all comes down to, you don't have to humble yourself and keep submitting to God. You can please yourself, and it will be okay.

Now the moment you choose to give in to pride, you have stopped walking in the Spirit, and you are walking according to the flesh. And as Paul told us, the works of the flesh are horrible: 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, (Gal. 5:19-21)

And what has just happened is that that test: be it the test of having too little money, or the test of having an abundance of money, the test of bodily pain and weakness, or the test of bodily beauty and youth, the test of everything going your way, or the test of everything going wrong, the test has now been infected with pride, and now the responses to the test will be proud, selfish, fleshly responses. The test that could have grown and shaped and strengthened you spiritually, has just turned into sin.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Deliver us from his deceitful enticement to pride.

When appealing to pride does not have the desired effect, Satan's other common strategy is to intimidate and tempt us to unbelief. When flattery doesn't work, he will use fear. Mixed in with the Eve's temptation to pride, was a temptation to fear and unbelief: Do you know that you are missing out on a life of being a goddess? Do you know that God hasn't told you the whole truth? Your best life now, lies on the other side of just one bite. What if you never experience that?

With Christ, the temptation to unbelief was subtle. The Spirit has told you that you are the Son of God? Really? It just looks like you are really suffering for the supposed Son of God. Why don't you make sure, and turn these stones into bread. What if you're not? What if you're fasting for nothing? Are you really the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the World? Why then do you have to go to a cross and die? I can give you control of the world right now. We'll be co-rulers – why go that awful route of dying for others sins?

And so with us. When an appeal to pride has not worked, Satan appeals to fear to tempt us to unbelief. What if God doesn't provide for you this month? Is it really worth living the way you're living? What if disciplining your child turns him against you and he starts to hate you? Maybe the Bible doesn't mean all that about discipline a child promptly? What if sharing the Gospel makes you really unpopular with a colleague or friend or family member? Maybe it's better to say nothing. What if you miss out on all the fun that others have if you really get serious with God and serve Him in the church? You'll never get those years back. Best to live it up while you can. What if another guy or girl doesn't come along? Maybe you just need to settle for an unsaved spouse – you can win him or her to the Lord later.

Satan's temptation to unbelief is not just concern about realities. Satan's temptation is to disbelieve the promises of God. Satan wants you to re-interpret your problem through the lens of unbelief. Maybe it isn't all true. Maybe God's Word doesn't have the answers. Maybe you need to do things your own way, and in the way that makes sense to you.

But once you give in to unbelief, then like pride, you have stepped away from the control of the Spirit, stepped into the flesh, and given the steering wheel to unbelieving fear. Now the test of crime, or the test of unemployment, or the test of singleness, or the test of problems is now viewed

through the lens of unbelief. And let me tell you, unbelief seems absolutely rational at the time, and continuing to trust the promises of God seems impractical.

God will seldom give you a test where there aren't real dangers, real risks, real threats. Life is not a Teletubby episode. It's not an amusement park ride where you're safely strapped in. But those real threats, and dangers, like Egyptian chariots bearing down on you when the sea is in front of you, like giants walking around the land you're supposed to conquer, like hostile audiences who threaten to kill you if you preach, like governments that begin to ban your worship or discipleship, like making a meal for the prophet when it's the last oil you have, they all test: are the promises of God real enough for real life? Satan will whisper, "that's all very well for the pious on Sunday morning. But we've got to be realistic. God hasn't come through. You need to do your own thing."

Life is filled with trials that tempt us, and temptations that test us. Satan aggravates the pride and unbelief already resident in our flesh, so as to turn all trials into sin. So this leads us to bring this together and ask,

III. What does it mean to pray "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One"?

We are asking, please restrain Satan's deception and intimidation as I am tested. My trials are hard enough with my flesh. Rescue me from a trial in which I will stumble, deliver me from the allurements to sin becoming too great.

In praying this we are stating our desire to come out of trials and temptations unscathed. You cannot pray this prayer and then toy with sin. "Lead us not into temptation" means we are not going to be walking towards temptation, but fleeing from it.

Like the man who was overweight and decided to diet. He took losing weight seriously enough that he changed his driving route to work to avoid driving past the bakery. But one morning, he arrived at work with a huge coffee cake. His colleagues were surprised, to say the least, and asked for an explanation.

"This is a very special coffee cake", said the man. "You see, this morning, I accidentally drove past the bakery, and I saw in the window all these warm goodies. I felt it wasn't an accident, so I prayed "Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let me find a parking spot directly in front of the bakery. And sure enough, the ninth time around the block, there it was!"

Keep me from falling into Satan's first strategy: to flatter my pride. Make me mindful of the pride rising in me during the trial, the sense of Self, the feeling that I have a right to sin.

Keep me from giving in to Satan's second strategy: to fear and give in to unbelief. Let me sense when I am doubting God's promises, looking for alternatives to trust and obey.

Now we will never know, in this life, to what degree God restrained the hand of Satan. But we know He does it. Satan complains to God in Job, " 10 "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? (Job 1:10)"

The hedge speaks of restraint. Jesus told Peter 31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat.

32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren." (Lk. 22:31-32)

This work of restraint is what God does.

2Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. (1 Jn. 5:18)

In fact, when the restraint is lifted, the person can be deeply wounded.

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:5)

1Ti 1:20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Please keep restraining Satan and the forces of wickedness from their tactics to bring about pride and unbelief in our problems and tests. Instead, let our tests and temptations turn into more humility, and more faith.

Why does this request come last? Because, in a way, all of life is trial and temptation. Every day, all day, there will be some kind of test, some kind of allurements. The problems will come from outside you. The temptation will come from within you. And the aggravation, the deception, the intimidation will come from Satan. So this request looks out at all the problems in your life, all the struggles, pains, challenges, difficulties, and consecrates them. To be honest, this is the stuff your mind wonders to when you start praying, and you're trying to focus. The things that are worrying you, bothering you, alarming you. The pressures, the things needing to be done.

We began the prayer with the Gospel, speaking to God of our relationship with Him. We turn then to His priorities, making His name and glory something we want to reverence, and see revered. From God's priorities we turn to God's program, praying for His rule to be established on earth, first by the Gospel spreading, and second by His return. Fourth, we then ask for God's perfect will, and His sovereign will to line up as much as possible here in earth. We apply that to every area that the Spirit leads us to.

Having been saturated with God's name, God's kingdom, God's will, we are now ready to pray for our needs. We pray for our essential needs, which are both spiritual and physical, and we ask for them one day at a time. Give me what I need physically, and give me what I need for my soul. One of our greatest needs is communion with God, so we then humbly turn to our Father for fatherly forgiveness, reminding ourselves that those who ask for mercy must grant it to others. And then, we commit all our works and needs and problems to God, asking that if it be possible, the trial be minimized, but if not, that Satan would be restrained and we would pass each test.

And then the prayer closes with this wonderful doxology. It's not found in some ancient New Testament manuscripts, though it is found in the majority of them.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matt. 6:9-13)

Why can we pray for God's name, kingdom, will, and for our needs, forgiveness and trials? Because God already has all authority, all might, and all beauty. God is not trying to gain these things, He already has them. And it is from this bounty that He can answer prayers.

When Martin Luther's barber asked for guidance on prayer, Luther's response was, take the Lord's prayer, and turn each line into longer prayers. We've now seen seven ways to do that.